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File No. 1368

Excerpt from

Annex No. 15

IMPERIAL EDICT of February 1, 1901.

In all the provinces bandits called for followers and established antiforeign societies. Various edicts were issued formally forbidding this. We repeated this many times, but, nevertheless, in late years there have been in all the Shantung districts sects under the name of Ta-tao-huei (Great Knives Society) and I-ho-chuan (Boxers), which spread everywhere, with the object of willful murder and theft. Little by little they reached the Chi-li territory and suddenly entered the capital, where they set fire to the foreign establishments and attacked the Legations. Crimes were also committed against neighboring countries and offenses against the general interest. For not having assured protection we have incurred heavy responsibilities.

You people who in ordinary times nourish yourselves and live from the products of this land, and who have all been loaded with the Empire's favors --you have, however, dared to incite these bandits with the desire to fight, to teach methods for casting spells, and to devote themselves to false practices. You have rashly resisted your officials, whom you have massacred; you have assassinated foreigners, and then you have been the cause of unprecedented calamities, which above all else have plunged your Sovereign and your fathers in grief.

We can not think of what has been done without feeling a still deeper resentment. We have already formally ordered the Commanders in chief of all the regions to use their most strenuous

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efforts to destroy these societies. It is incumbent that the root of the evil be suppressed, and the Princes and Ministers who have lent their support to the Boxers shall suffer the heaviest penalties according to their crimes, and in order to inspire fear, all civil and military examinations shall be suspended during five years in all cities where foreigners were massacred or suffered cruel treatment.

Fearing lest the ignorant rural populations may not hear (of these punishments), new and severe prohibitions shall be specially made in order to avoid the execution of people who have not been notified.

You, soldiers and people, should know that it is formally forbidden by law to organize or belong to secret societies. Our ancestors have never shown the slightest indulgence in the repression of societies of malefactors.

Moreover, the foreign Powers are all friendly countries, the Christians are children of our blood whom the Court regards with a some kindness, and it could not allow different sentiments to be displayed towards them. All Chinese, whether Christians or not, who may be illtreated, should complain to the authorities and wait until a fair and equitable judgment is rendered. How can you lightly believe all the rumors which have been spread? how can you dis regard the penal laws?

Then, when all is lost, the clever ones save themselves by flight and the innocent are put to death. The law is slow to pardon, and all that has happened is really very regrettable. From the publication of this present edict, each one must reform